

SAUDI ARABIA | IN FOCUS

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF THE INFORMATION OFFICE OF
THE ROYAL EMBASSY OF SAUDI ARABIA IN WASHINGTON, DC



AUGUST 16, 2011

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SAUDI ARABIA-U.S. RELATIONS

King Abdullah speaks with U.S. President

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz received a telephone call from U.S. President Barack Obama on August 13. During their conversation, the two leaders reviewed bilateral relations and discussed the latest developments in the regional and international arenas.

L.A. County Museum of Art acquires work from Saudi artists

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) recently acquired work from two contemporary Saudi artists, Ahmed Mater and Abdulnasser Gharem, which will be featured in its permanent collection on Middle Eastern and Islamic art. "This acquisition provides people with an opportunity to learn more about Saudi art," said Saudi Ambassador to the United States Adel Al-Jubeir. "Exhibits like this strengthen cultural ties between our two nations."

FOREIGN RELATIONS

Turkish President, Pakistani Prime Minister visit the Kingdom

The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz received Turkish President Abdullah Gul in Jeddah on August 15. The two leaders discussed current regional and international developments and bilateral relations. President Gul traveled to the Kingdom last weekend to participate in a meeting of the Board of Trustees of Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies. During his visit, the Turkish leader also performed Umrah (minor pilgrimage) and met with senior Saudi officials, including Second Deputy Prime Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz and Jeddah Governor Prince Meshal bin Majed bin Abdulaziz.

Pakistani Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani also made a brief trip to Saudi Arabia that concluded on August 9. During his time in the Kingdom, he visited Jeddah and performed prayers at the Holy Mosque of the Prophet in Madinah.

Cabinet condemns Israeli settlement expansion

During a weekly Cabinet meeting held in Jeddah on August 15, the Council of Ministers expressed the Kingdom's strong denunciation of the decision by Israeli authorities to build thousands of new residential units in Eastern Al-Quds

[Jerusalem]. It once again called upon the world community to put pressure on Israel to halt its unilateral measures aimed at changing the face of the city.

ISLAM

Foreign Ministry issues nearly 5 million Umrah visas this year

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued 4,856,000 Umrah visas for the year 1432 H., according to Assistant to the Minister of Foreign Affairs Prince Khalid bin Saudi bin Khalid – an increase of 1 million over the previous year. The number of Umrah visas issued will continue to increase as new expansion projects ordered by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz at the Holy Sites in Makkah and Madinah are completed, said Prince Khalid. He stressed the Kingdom's commitment to serving pilgrims from around the world and facilitating the completion of their religious rituals.

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Saudi King Launches Fundraising Campaign for Somali People

WASHINGTON [August 22, 2011] — Today, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz launched the Saudi National Campaign for the Relief of Somali People to collect donations for the people of Somalia suffering from drought and famine. All funds from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will be transferred to an account at National Commercial Bank (NCB) under the supervision of Prince Naif bin Abdulaziz.

In a statement issued on Saturday by the Royal Court, King Abdullah urged all Saudis to donate generously to the Somali people. During his statement, King Abdullah quoted a number of verses from the Holy Qur'an encouraging all to donate and support the campaign.

"This campaign continues Saudi Arabia's advocacy for the well-being of the people of Somalia," said Saudi Ambassador to the United States, Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir. "The Kingdom is committed to supporting the victims in Somalia and other nations in need of humanitarian aid and support."

King Abdullah kicked off the campaign with a \$5.3 million donation. Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz donated \$2.7 million and Second Deputy Prime Minister Prince Nayef bin Abdulaziz donated \$1.3 million to the campaign. Saudi television channels also will air live broadcast of the campaign.

Last week, the Jeddah-based Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) pledged \$350 million for a Somalia anti-starvation program. In July, Saudi Arabia pledged \$50 million in emergency humanitarian assistance for Somali refugees to be used for food supplies in cooperation with the World Food Program (WFP) and \$10 million in medicine and vaccinations in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO).

For more information on Saudi Arabia please visit www.saudiembassy.net or follow the Embassy on Twitter @SaudiEmbassyUSA.

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Saudi Arabia Raises \$54 Million for Somali People

WASHINGTON [August 24, 2011] — Today, the Saudi National Campaign for the Relief of the Somali People announced that it has raised \$54 million in relief funding for the people suffering from famine in Somalia. In addition to financial assistance, donations including food, shelter materials and medical supplies have been distributed to the people of Somalia.

“The Kingdom’s contribution to alleviate the suffering of the Somali people is in accordance with its pledge to help those in need around the world,” said Saudi Ambassador to the United States Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir. “We hope that the people affected by the famine in Somalia will be able to overcome this tragedy.”

The assistance campaign was initiated by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz who urged all Saudis to donate generously to the Somali people. The relief funds will be distributed by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and, according to the organization, donations will be used to feed Somali children suffering from malnutrition.

In July, Saudi Arabia pledged \$50 million in emergency humanitarian assistance for Somali refugees to be used for food supplies in cooperation with the World Food Program (WFP) and \$10 million in medicine and vaccinations in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO).

Saudi Arabia is a valued partner of the World Food Programme and has donated more than \$600 million to the United Nations food agency during the past five years. On August 17, the Jeddah-based Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) pledged \$350 million for a Somalia anti-starvation program.

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